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STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION® / DOCTOR WHO

ASSIMILATION²

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THE NEXT GENERATION®
DOCTOR WHO
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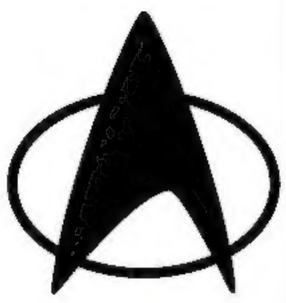
ASSIMILATION²

The story so far...

The Doctor is an alien, the last of the powerful Time Lords. He is an intrepid traveller through time and space, armed only with his incredible intelligence and his fix-anything sonic screwdriver. He travels alone, except for the human companions he befriends, briefly sharing his life with them and showing them the astonishing wonders of the universe.

Space... the Final Frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. Its continuing mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go were no one has gone before.

Captain Picard has requested that some members of the crew test a recent upgrade to the holodeck, a program that simulates life in 1941 San Francisco. There, they run into three mysterious strangers, one claiming to be a "Doctor," and they take them to the Captain. At that moment, a transmission comes in informing the team of the Borg/Cyberman attack, casting suspicion on the Doctor, who knows a little too much about the new enemy...



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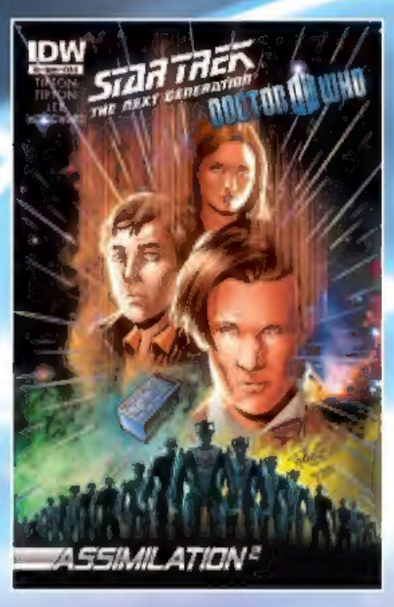

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"RED ALERT! SHIELDS UP!"

DATA, HAVE WE BEEN DETECTED?

AFFIRMATIVE, CAPTAIN. THEY ARE MOVING TO INTERCEPT.

WE ARE BEING HAILED, CAPTAIN.

ON SCREEN, MR. WORF.

YOU HAVE NO MEANS OF STOPPING US.

WE ARE UNDER ATTACK FROM MULTIPLE SHIPS, CAPTAIN. SHIELDS ALREADY DOWN TO 75 PERCENT.
WE CAN'T FIGHT THAT ENTIRE FLEET.
AGREED, NUMBER ONE.

DATA, GET US OUT OF HERE NOW. BEST SPEED.
ALREADY WORKING ON IT, CAPTAIN.

WHO IS THAT WITH THE BORG? WE'VE NEVER SEEN THEM BEFORE.
THOSE ARE THE CYBERMEN. VERY BAD. AS BAD AS YOUR BORG, IF NOT WORSE.
YOU KNOW THEM, DOCTOR?

I KNOW THEM ALL TOO WELL, UNFORTUNATELY. FOR THE MOMENT, I RECOMMEND GETTING AS FAR AWAY AS POSSIBLE, UNTIL WE CAN WORK OUT WHAT THEIR PLAN IS.
NO ARGUMENT HERE.
IT'S NOT LIKE THE BORG TO COOPERATE WITH ANYONE. ARE THEY ALLIES? WHO WAS THAT IN THE MIDDLE IN THE CHAIR?
PROBABLY A CYBER CONTROLLER, ONE OF THEIR LEADERS, ONLY FITTED SOMEHOW WITH YOUR BORG TECHNOLOGY.
YOU DO KNOW THEM. WHAT MORE CAN YOU TELL US?
CAPTAIN, THE PURSUING SHIPS ARE GAINING ON US. THEY WILL INTERCEPT IN APPROXIMATELY 17 MINUTES.
DATA, BUY US SOME TIME. FIND US SOME COVER— AN ASTEROID FIELD, A GAS GIANT, OR A NEBULA—ANYTHING THAT WILL CONFUSE THEIR SENSORS AND DISCOURAGE PURSUIT.
THE PAERTES NEBULA IS NEARBY. SETTING A COURSE AT HIGH SPEED.
"MAKE IT SO, MISTER DATA."

"AS PREDICTED, CAPTAIN, THE ENEMY APPEARS TO BE HESITANT TO PURSUE US INTO THE NEBULA."

HOWEVER, IT WILL NOT TAKE LONG FOR THEM TO DEVISE A WAY TO FORCE US OUT.

BUT THIS WILL GIVE US SOME TIME TO FIGURE OUT OUR NEXT STEP.

MM-HMM.

WHICH BRINGS US TO *YOU*, OUR MYSTERIOUS FRIEND. FOR SOMEONE WHO CLAIMS NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION, YOU CERTAINLY FIND YOURSELF IN THE THICK OF IT.

CAPTAIN, I REALIZE HOW THIS MUST LOOK TO YOU. YOU HAVE MY WORD THAT I HAVE NO IDEA HOW I CAME TO BE HERE OR WHAT THE CYBERMEN ARE UP TO.

BUT TRUST ME WHEN I SAY THAT MY BEING HERE, RIGHT NOW, KNOWING WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THEM, IS ONLY GOING TO HELP YOU.

THAT'S WHAT I DO, THAT'S ALL I EVER DO. I TRY TO HELP.

WELL, THEN. I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THESE CYBERMEN...

RUTHLESS, UNRELENTING, AND DEVOTED TO SURVIVAL THROUGH CONQUEST... WITH EMOTION STRIPPED AWAY AS CAVALIERLY AS THEY'VE TORN THE FLESH FROM THEIR BODIES.

SO THEY ARE ALSO A MIXTURE OF ORGANIC LIFE AND MECHANICS? DO THEY ASSIMILATE OTHER SPECIES, AS THE BORG DO?

THE CYBERMEN REPLACE THEIR ORGANS WITH MECHANICAL PARTS, AND SEEK TO DO THE SAME TO OTHERS. THEY CALL IT CYBER-CONVERSION.

IS THERE NO REASONING WITH THEM?

THEY WILL SEEK EITHER OUR DESTRUCTION OR OUR FORCED CONVERSION. NOTHING ELSE WILL SATISFY THEM.

DATA, DO WE HAVE ANY RECORD OF THESE "CYBERMEN"?
VERY LITTLE, CAPTAIN. I AM SCANNING THE HISTORICAL DATABASE FOR ANY INCIDENTS WITH BEINGS THAT MATCH THE DOCTOR'S DESCRIPTION AND THE VISUALS FROM THE TRANSMISSION.
THAT'S IT, DATA. WHAT'S THIS LOG ENTRY FROM?
THIS LOG ENTRY IS... FROM THE ENTERPRISE.

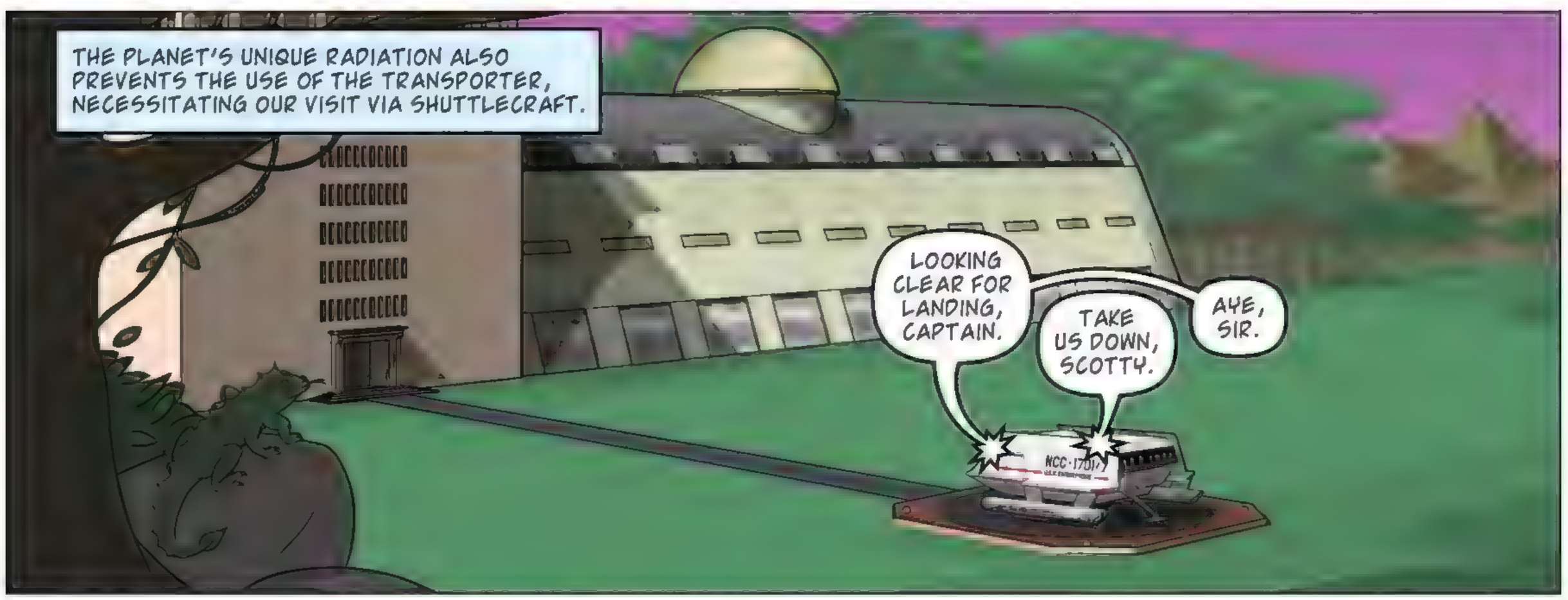
THE ENTERPRISE?
THE ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION-CLASS ENTERPRISE, REGISTRY NUMBER NCC-1701, COMMANDED BY JAMES T. KIRK.
WHILE VISITING AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE, A SMALL GROUP FROM THE ENTERPRISE ENCOUNTERED SOME BEINGS REFERRED TO IN THE LOGS AS "CYBER-MEN."
WHOA...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M HONESTLY NOT SURE...
NCC-1701/7

CAPTAIN'S LOG, STARDATE 3368.5.

MISTER SPOCK, DOCTOR MCCOY, AND COMMANDER SCOTT ARE ACCOMPANYING ME TO APRILIA III, SITE OF A LONG-ABANDONED RELAY STATION APPARENTLY BUILT BY AN ALIEN CIVILIZATION CENTURIES AGO.

A FEDERATION ARCHAEOLOGY TEAM HAS BEEN STATIONED HERE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, ATTEMPTING TO GLEAN ANY KNOWLEDGE FROM THE MYSTERIOUS AND UNWORKABLE TECHNOLOGY, BUT HAS FAILED TO MAKE ITS LAST THREE SCHEDULED REPORTS.

SUBSPACE COMMUNICATION HAS GONE UNANSWERED. IT'S MOST LIKELY A SIMPLE COMMUNICATIONS BREAKDOWN, BUT BEST TO BE CERTAIN.



THIS IS AN UNEXPECTED SURPRISE. WELCOME TO APRILIA III.
Galileo II
NCC
U.S.S. E
NCC-1701-

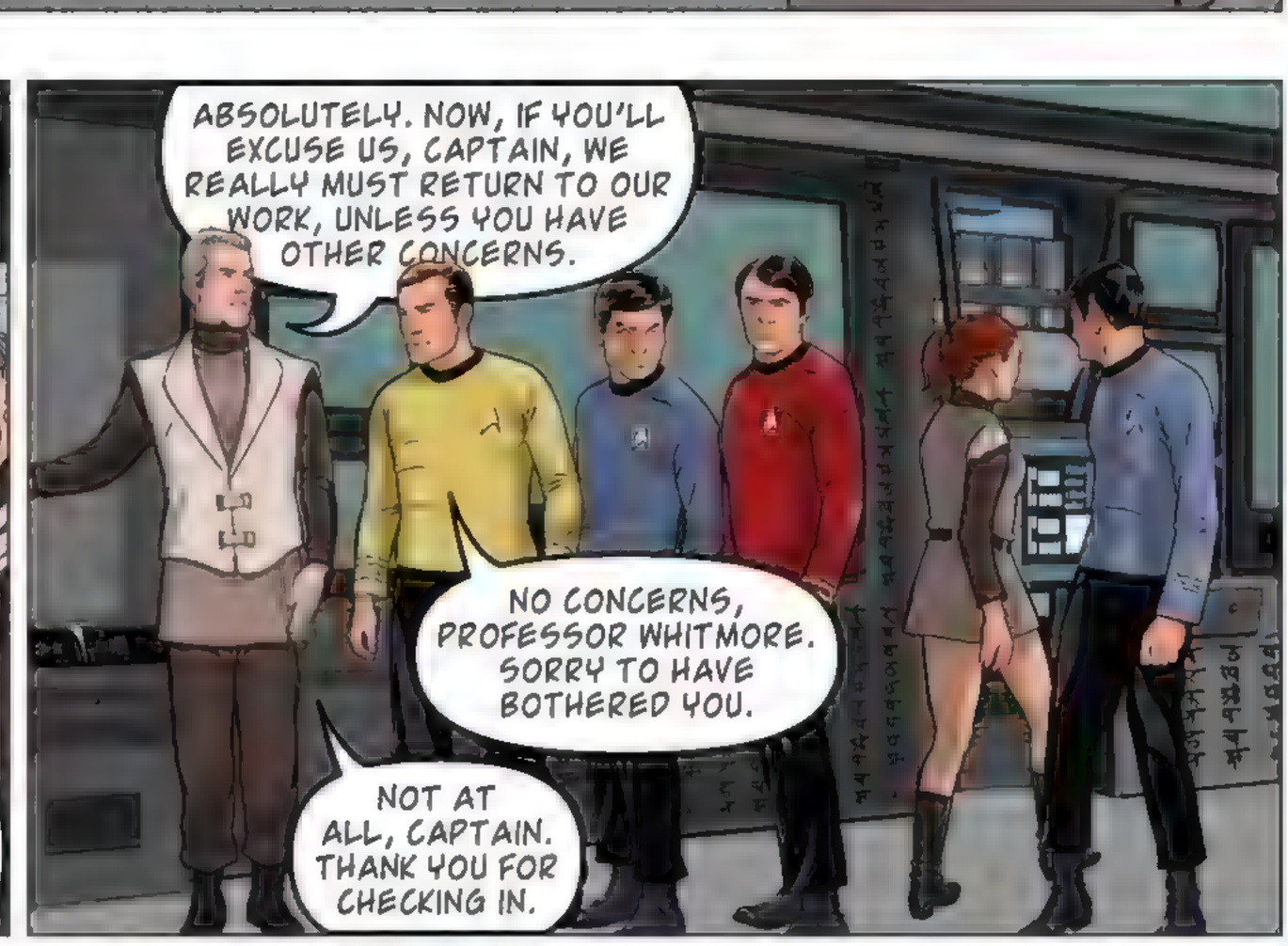
WELL, WHEN YOU STOPPED RETURNING OUR CALLS, WE THOUGHT WE'D DROP IN FOR A VISIT. I'M CAPTAIN JAMES T. KIRK, U.S.S. *ENTERPRISE*. THIS IS MY FIRST OFFICER, MR. SPOCK, SHIP'S SURGEON, DR. MCCOY, CHIEF ENGINEER, MR. SCOTT.
PROFESSOR JEFFERSON WHITMORE, PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE FACILITY.
OUR MESSAGES AREN'T GETTING THROUGH? I THOUGHT WE'D IRONED THAT OUT.

THE SAME RADIATION BELT THAT PREVENTS TRANSPORTER FUNCTION CAN ALSO JAM SUBSPACE SIGNALS. WE WERE SURE WE'D SOLVED THE PROBLEM, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'LL NEED TO TRY AGAIN.
COME, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU AROUND.

WE'D BE DELIGHTED, PROFESSOR WHITMORE.
RIGHT THIS WAY.
THOUGHTS, CAPTAIN?
ON YOUR TOES, MR. SCOTT...

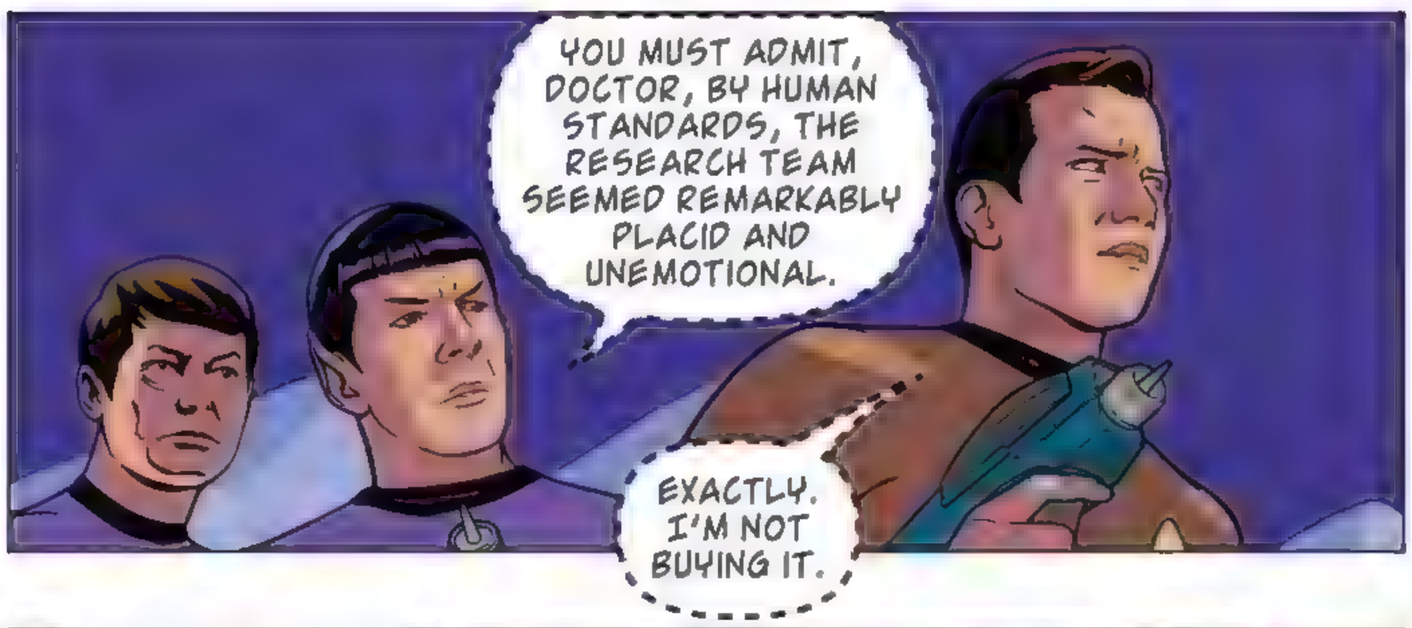
THIS IS THE MAIN RELAY STATION THAT WAS DISCOVERED. WE STILL HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO ACTIVATE IT, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE DETERMINED THAT THERE IS STILL POWER CIRCULATING THROUGH IT. WHERE THAT'S COMING FROM IS SOMETHING ELSE WE'RE NOT SURE ABOUT...
WE HAVE GUESTS, PROFESSOR?
MY APOLOGIES, DOCTOR. CAPTAIN JAMES KIRK OF THE U.S.S. *ENTERPRISE*. CAPTAIN, THIS IS DOCTOR PAULA ZARLENGA, ONE OF OUR RESEARCHERS.

A PLEASURE, DOCTOR. WE'D GROWN WORRIED ABOUT YOU DOWN HERE.
THE ONLY THING TO BE WORRIED ABOUT HERE IS THE SLIGHT STALL IN OUR RESEARCH. BUT I'M CONFIDENT WE'LL HAVE PROGRESS TO REPORT SOON.


ABSOLUTELY. NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US, CAPTAIN, WE REALLY MUST RETURN TO OUR WORK, UNLESS YOU HAVE OTHER CONCERNS.
NO CONCERNS, PROFESSOR WHITMORE. SORRY TO HAVE BOTHERED YOU.
NOT AT ALL, CAPTAIN. THANK YOU FOR CHECKING IN.

SCOTTY, YOU CONVINCED?
NOT ONE BIT, CAP'N.
ME NEITHER.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS AGAIN?
COME ON, BONES. YOU SAW THOSE PEOPLE IN THERE. DID THAT SEEM NORMAL TO YOU? THEY WERE PRACTICALLY ZOMBIES.


YOU MUST ADMIT, DOCTOR, BY HUMAN STANDARDS, THE RESEARCH TEAM SEEMED REMARKABLY PLACID AND UNEMOTIONAL.
EXACTLY. I'M NOT BUYING IT.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, SCOTTY? ANY CHANCE YOU CAN GET US PAST THAT LOCK?
I'VE NOT SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT, SIR, BUT THAT'S NEVER STOPPED ME BEFORE.

SCOTTY, TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE...
AYE, SIR, I'M TRYIN'.
HELLO. CAN I BE OF ASSISTANCE?

WHO ARE YOU?
I'M THE DOCTOR. HAVING A LITTLE TROUBLE WITH THE DOOR?
YOU'RE WITH THE RESEARCH TEAM?
I'VE ONLY JUST ARRIVED. I'M CERTAIN I COULD HELP YOU OUT THERE, IF YOU'LL PERMIT ME...

I'M HAVIN' NO LUCK WITH IT, CAP'N. IF HE'S GOT A SOLUTION, I'M ALL FOR IT.
BZZZZ
KLAK
THIS SHOULD DO THE TRICK, I SHOULD THINK.

IS THAT THE KEY?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT. NOW, WHO WOULD LIKE A JELLY BABY? HMM?

FASCINATING. GELATIN CONFECTIONARY, DUSTED WITH STARCH, AND MOLDED INTO THE SHAPE OF A SMALL CHILD.
YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE OUR UNANNOUNCED RETURN TO YOUR FACILITY, DOCTOR, BUT WHEN WE WERE HERE EARLIER TODAY, SOMETHING DIDN'T SEEM QUITE RIGHT.
REALLY? DO TELL.

WELL, THIS SEEMS A LITTLE OUT OF THE ORDINARY...
YES, I CAN AGREE WITH THAT. IT'S QUITE DISCONCERTING, ISN'T IT?

WHITMORE?! HE'S COMPLETELY CATATONIC, JIM.
ZARLENGA, TOO.
CAPTAIN! LOOK HERE.
SNAP SNAP

ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE RESEARCH TEAM APPEAR TO BE WEARING THESE DEVICES IN THEIR EARS.

NO EARPIECE HERE, CAPTAIN! THIS IS ALL NEWS TO ME!
THESE DEVICES ARE SOMEHOW BLOCKING ALL SENSORY INPUT TO THE BRAIN.
WITHOUT ANY INPUT COMING IN, THESE POOR PEOPLE ARE JUST...

...JUST SHUT DOWN. CAN YOU REMOVE THEM?
IT LOOKS THAT WAY, I DON'T SEE ANY PERMANENT GRAFTS IN PLACE.
DO IT.

UHNNNNHN...
LOOKS LIKE HE'S COMING OUT OF IT.
GOOD. SPOCK, SCOTTY, WAKE THE REST OF THESE PEOPLE UP, AND LET'S GET THEM OUT OF HERE BEFORE WHOEVER DID THIS MAKES AN APPEARANCE.

FSSSSSSS
AH. SPOKE TOO SOON.

BZZZZ

CYBER-WHO?

CYBERMEN! GET THE PEOPLE OUT OF HERE!

YOU MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE!

YOU HEARD THE MAN! GET THE RESEARCH TEAM TO THE SHUTTLE!

STOP THEM!
LET'S GO, DAMN IT! YOU WANT THOSE UNGODLY THINGS JAMMED BACK IN YOUR EARS?
PREPARE TO FIRE, MR. SCOTT.

BRAWWW
YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE!
SET YOUR PHASER TO "MAXIMUM POWER," COMMANDER.
AYE...

THUD

WANG

—HUCHH—

HUMANS CANNOT HARM US!

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE ANY GOLD ON YOUR PERSON, DO YOU?
WHAT?!

I'VE RUN INTO THESE FELLOWS BEFORE.
THE COVER THAT FLIPS OPEN IS GOLD. WHAT HAVE YOU GOT IN MIND?
CAN YOU DISTRACT HIM FOR A MOMENT?

DISTRACT HIM. SURE.
WHIRRRRRR

CLANG

—BZZZT! BZZZT!

—BZZZT! BZZZT!
CAPTAIN! GET DOWN!

BRRVRR

YOU SEE, THE GOLD FLAKE INTERFERES WITH THEIR RESPIRATORY SYSTEM.
RESPIRATORY SYSTEM? YOU MEAN THOSE THINGS ACTUALLY BREATHE?
THE OTHER TWO ARE DOWN, CAPTAIN. ALL THE RESEARCHERS ARE SAFE.
SEARCH THE FACILITY. I DON'T WANT ANY MORE SURPRISES.

LATER...
NO SIGN OF ANY MORE OF THESE "CYBER-MEN," CAPTAIN.
AND THERE LOOKS TO BE NO DAMAGE TO THE FACILITY?
NONE THAT WE CAN ASCERTAIN.

IT'S JUST FORTUNATE FOR US YOU ARRIVED WHEN YOU DID, CAPTAIN.

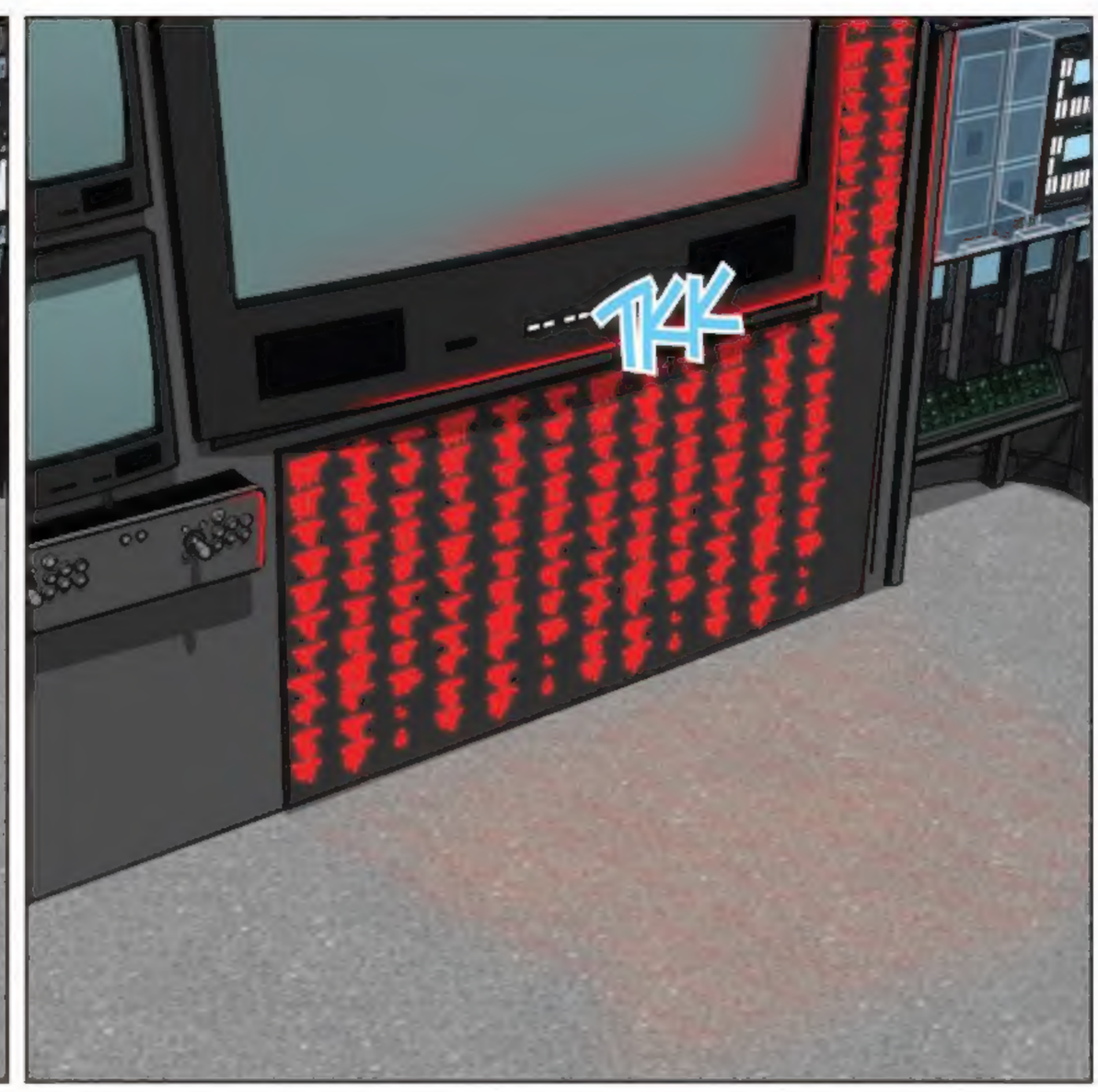
"I DON'T BELIEVE IN BEING LUCKY TWICE, PROFESSOR WHITMORE. WE'LL BE ARRANGING FOR A PERMANENT GARRISON OF SECURITY PERSONNEL HERE, JUST IN CASE YOU HAVE ANY MORE UNEXPECTED VISITORS."

SPEAKING OF UNEXPECTED, WHERE'S YOUR DOCTOR? IF HE HADN'T COME ALONG WHEN HE DID, WE MIGHT NEVER HAVE EVEN GOTTEN IN HERE.

OUR DOCTOR? WE THOUGHT HE WAS WITH YOU!

AND YE'VE HAD NO LUCK IN FIGURING THIS THING OUT?
NONE. WE CAN'T CHANGE A READING OR EVEN GET A TRANSMISSION OUT OF IT.

DON'T DESPAIR, LASSIE. YOU'LL CRACK IT YET. IT'S JUST A GOOD THING WE GOT HERE BEFORE THOSE MECHANICAL CLANKERS WERE ABLE TO MONKEY WITH IT.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WELL! THAT WAS UNEXPECTED!
DOCTOR?! WHAT HAPPENED?
DO YOU REQUIRE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?
NO, NO, I'LL BE FINE.
THAT WAS ME; I WAS THERE. I REMEMBER THAT NOW.
PECULIAR THING IS, I ALSO REMEMBER NOT REMEMBERING THAT.
THERE IS NO RECORD OF YOU IN THE LOG.
THE CHAP WITH THE SCARF. THAT WAS ME. I JUST... LOOKED A LITTLE DIFFERENT.

HOW COULD YOU HAVE BEEN THERE?
IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO EXPLAIN, REALLY.
HE DOES TRAVEL A LOT, YOU KNOW...

THAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OLD?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, COMMANDER. I'M NOWHERE NEAR 100.
CAPTAIN, IF I'M REMEMBERING THINGS THAT SHOULD NOT BE, WE'RE ALL IN EVEN GREATER DANGER THAN I REALIZED.

INDEED. FIRST THINGS FIRST: WHAT IS OUR STATUS, MISTER WORF?
SCANNERS SHOW NO SIGN OF OUR PURSUERS, CAPTAIN. PERHAPS THEY GAVE UP.
THAT'S NOT LIKE THE CYBERMEN. IF THEY GAVE UP ON US, IT MUST BE IN PURSUIT OF SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT.

BIGGER FISH TO FRY. YOU MAY BE RIGHT, DOCTOR, BUT LET US TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS RESPITE TO ATTEMPT TO FIND SOME ANSWERS. AND I BELIEVE I MAY KNOW WHERE TO START.

TO BE CONTINUED!